Verified Voting

March 24, 2023

Senate Judiciary Committee
Arkansas General Assembly
1 Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201
Via email
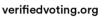
**Verified Voting Supports Provisions for Voter-Verifiable Paper Records in HB 435
-- With Recommendations for Improvement**

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of Verified Voting, I write in support of the provisions for voter-verifiable paper records in SB 435. Verified Voting is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization with a mission to strengthen democracy for all voters by promoting the responsible use of technology in elections. Since our founding in 2004 by computer scientists, we have acted on the belief that the integrity and strength of our democracy rely on citizens' trust that each vote is counted as cast. With that in mind, we applaud the paper ballot provisions in SB 435.

Experts agree that paper-based voting systems are fundamental to election security. In a joint statement issued in November 2020, members of the Election Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (GCC) Executive Committee and Election Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Council (SCC) pointed out that paper records of each vote allow "the ability to go back and count each ballot if necessary. This is an added benefit for security and resilience. This process allows for the identification and correction of any mistakes or errors."[1]

Why do we need voter-verifiable paper records in our high-tech world? Because they provide assurance in the face of possible hacks, malfunctions, and errors that might subvert the will of the voters. In essence, paper records provide a way to make sure, and to demonstrate to voters, that the computers counted votes correctly. Having voters inspect, verify, and have the opportunity to spoil their ballots and redo them, if necessary, provides trustworthy evidence for the public to have confidence in the election results. The ballots then can be used in routine audits, and in recounts, to confirm or establish the correct outcomes. In an interview, former Department of Homeland Security CISA Director Chris Krebs said, "Auditability is a key tenet of

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[1] "Joint Statement from Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council & the Election Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Executive Committees," 2020. https://www.cisa.gov/news/2020/11/12/joint-statement-elections-infrastructure-government-coordinating-council-election.

ensuring you can have a secure and resilient system. If you've got paper you've got receipts, and so you can build back up to what the accurate count is."[2]

Hand-marked paper ballots (HMPB) provide the easiest way for most voters to verify their votes, and they provide resilience against errors in or doubts about the vote count through routine post-election audits. **We recommend legislation that would have HMPBs as the primary and first option for voters, supplemented by ballot marking devices that provide assistive technology for voters who desire or need this method to mark their voter-verifiable paper ballot.** With a paper-based, voter-verifiable voting system, the state would be far better positioned to weather both cyberattacks and efforts to undermine public confidence in elections.

We urge favorable action on implementing voter-verifiable paper records, particularly hand-marked paper ballots for most voters, to help reinforce Arkansas voters' confidence in the state's elections for years to come.

Respectfully submitted,

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[2] Patterson, Dan. "Paper Ballots Could Save the Election, DHS Cybersecurity Chief Says," August 26, 2020. https://www.cnet.com/news/how-paper-ballots-could-save-the-election/.